



Photo courtesy Paul Schlein, public information officer for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control

Gary Fish, of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, who addressed a crowd of about 20 people that turned out for an ecological landscaping demonstration last week at Back Cove.

# Back Cove garden to display ecologically sound plantings

The project will include native plants that require little maintenance, water, or fertilizer.

By **MELANIE CREAMER**

*News Assistant*

A new project was unveiled at Portland's Back Cove recently that will showcase a variety of plants, shrubs, and yardscaping materials that are low maintenance and ecologically friendly.

The yardscape will be a 2.5-acre site adjacent to the Preble Street soccer fields and parking lot. The site will feature a potpourri of plantings in urban, suburban, and rural settings. According to the press release, each area will demonstrate how homeowners and gardeners can design and install their own lawns and landscapes, which reduce reliance on pesticides, fertilizers, and water (and their runoff); support wildlife; and promote native and non-invasive plants.

"It will add more beauty to the area and will show off plants that are functional and beautiful," said Gary Fish, environmental

## THREE REASONS TO YARDSCAPE

**WATER POLLUTION:** Heavy rains or watering can wash away lawn fertilizers and pesticides can end up in bays, rivers, lakes, and groundwater—the drinking water source.

**PEOPLE'S HEALTH:** We do not know exactly the long-term effects of pesticide use or exposure. Medical experts believe we should avoid using them unnecessarily.

**AIR POLLUTION:** Reducing your lawn size to what you really need is YardScaping 101. Using a power mower consumes fossil fuels and causes air pollution. A lawnmower pollutes as much in one hour as a car driving 350 miles.

*Information provided by: Paul Schlein,  
Maine Board of Pesticide Control*

specialist for the Maine Board of Pesticides Control. "It will provide a diversion for people who are walking and running."

The Yardscaping Partnership represents more than 25 organizations, including state agencies, environmental groups, and nurseries. Some of their partners include Friends of Casco Bay and Back Cove Neighborhood Association. The project is being funded by a \$35,000 Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Fish said Mayor James Cohen wants to include this project as part of his sustainable Portland initiative. Their goal is to raise \$65,000, which will be used to help purchase plants for the project. Some of the plants include: Purple Ninebark, Bearberry, Bayberry, Winterberry Holly, and Sweet Fern.

"The use of these plants is so you won't have to spend so much time in the garden.

Some of these plants are native and some are not. They don't need a lot of attention. They don't need a lot of pesticides, fertilizer, or water," Fish said. "They are resistant to insect and disease problems."

Back Cove is an ideal location for this project. The Friends of Casco Bay detected a number of toxic chemicals in the water, said Cathy Ramsdell in the press release.

"All of Casco Bay, and particularly Back Cove, receives the runoff from thousands of yards and lawns in Greater Portland. We're convinced that YardScaping principles can make an immediate difference in the cleanliness of storm water that flows into our coastal waters."

To make a donation or to learn more about YardScaping go to [www.yardscaping.org](http://www.yardscaping.org).

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## YARDSCAPING FACTS

**3 MILLION POUNDS** of yard care pesticides were purchased in Maine in 2004.

**20 MILLION ACRES** of lawn are growing in the United States.

**40 HOURS** is the amount of time a person spends annually mowing the lawn.